

# LECHENAULTIA DIVARICATA (GOODENIACEAE) FROM THE GREAT VICTORIA DESERT, A NEW SPECIES RECORD FOR WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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## INTRODUCTION

*Lechenaultia divaricata* F. Muell. is described as a small, erect, divaricately branched shrub, with flowers varying in colour from yellow to white (Black 1980; Jessop (ed.) 1981; Morrison 1992). *L. divaricata* is widespread throughout arid and semi-arid central Australia (Morrison 1992), preferring sand dunes, sand plains, alluvial soils (Jessop (ed.) 1981) as well as floodplains or open vegetated areas (Morrison 1992).

## RESULTS

*Lechenaultia divaricata* was collected during a flora survey of areas to the south of Plumridge Lakes Nature Reserve on the edge of the Great Victoria Desert, Western Australia (PERTH vouchers ECO427-230; 231). The survey was conducted by *ecologia* Environment Pty Ltd for Western Areas NL. Specimens collected during the flora survey will be lodged with the Western Australian Herbarium (PERTH).

Two voucher specimens of *Lechenaultia divaricata* were collected on the 30<sup>th</sup> October 2004 on red sandplain south of the Plumridge Lakes Nature Reserve. The species was locally common on a section of sandplain that had been burnt ten months prior to collection (G. Kelly, Western Areas, pers. comm.). Plants were flowering at the time of collection (Figures 1 and 2).

## DISCUSSION

This is the first record of *Lechenaultia divaricata* for Western Australia. The species was recorded in late spring after a relatively recent burn, resulting in prolific re-growth of other species in the area. These observations suggest that *L. divaricata* is a fire ephemeral species, similar to *L. aphylla*, which appears after fires or other significant disturbances (Sage, 2002). The nearest collection point to that recorded here is more than 600 kilometers to the



Figure 1. Whole plant of *Lechenaultia divaricata* from the Great Victoria Desert. Photo by B. C. Barnett.



Figure 2. Close-up of flower of *Lechenaultia divaricata* from the Great Victoria Desert. Photo by B. C. Barnett.

north-east in the Northern Territory., This species is widespread throughout arid and semi-arid central Australia (Morrison 1992), occurring in the Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia and New South Wales.

Though common in central Australia, *L. divaricata* meets the criteria for conservation listing under the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) Conservation Codes for Priority Flora as a Priority I species (L Sage, CALM. pers. comm.). Due to the paucity of survey work conducted in the Great Victoria Desert and Central Australia, it is likely that *L. divaricata* is more common in Western Australia than is currently recognised.

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